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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Senator Menard Pledges Non-Partisan and Cooperative Budget Talks** *Calls on Governor to Deliver Realistic Spending Plan*

**Boston** - On the eve of budget deliberations, State Senator Joan M. Menard (D-Fall River) promised to continue the Senate's earnest collaboration with the Governor and House to deliver a responsible budget that makes government more efficient without raising taxes.

"It is our hope that we are able to overcome political partisanship with substance this upcoming fiscal year," said Senator Menard. "Let's work together to provide real and honest solutions that solve our state's budget crisis and put Massachusetts back on a firm economic platform."

Senate President Robert E. Travaglini (D- E. Boston) added that his colleagues proud to work with Governor Romney on implementing many of his reforms, as well as reforms the Senate believed made the best sense for taxpayers. "Of course, we did not agree on every issue" commented Travaglini. "The Governor refused to adopt many of our reform proposals, including changes to the Quinn Bill program and reform of the state's crime labs. The Legislature disagreed with Governor Romney on some of his proposals, but at the end of the day, we worked cooperatively to bring unprecedented change to state government."

This year as budget deliberations get underway, the state's continued fiscal crisis demands that lawmakers take a cautious approach in crafting the budget blueprint. "We will fight to ensure that programs we have already cut are not rendered ineffective by further budget cuts," said Senator Menard. "But we should not sugar coat the options that are available to us. The sobering reality is that we may have to again cut programs and raise fees to tackle the budget gap. We must continue to be thoughtful and sincere about the policy decisions we make and the effect they will have on the working families of this Commonwealth."

Senator Menard, along with her colleagues look forward to holding open discussions with the Governor about reforms in all area, including higher education, the courts and the Turnpike authority. But Senators are also calling on the Governor to devise realistic solutions to the fiscal crisis, not symbolic plans disguised as reforms.

"The Senate knows that reforms alone will not resolve the state's fiscal problems," said Senator Menard. "We don't want to mislead the public that these so-called reforms are a magical solution in solving the budget deficit."

This year the Senate is prepared to continue it's fight to maintain accessibility and affordability of health care and prescription drugs for seniors, renew the commitment to provide local property tax relief and adequate local aid funding levels for cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

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